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Emil Uddhammar

^ Växjö University, Växjö, Sweden

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Development, conservation and tourism: conflict or symbiosis?

Emil Uddhammar

Växjö University, Växjö, Sweden

ABSTRACT

Can the global and local interests of conservation, development and tourism work together? In this article I examine four protected areas in Africa and India where these interests have been pursued with various degrees of success. A critical application of the concept of global commodity chains helps to clarify how eco-tourism works, and what are its main driving forces. Friction between local practices and global conservation norms has been frequent. In the study, governance structures, local ownership and institutions for solving disputes and for joint management have been present in the more successful cases.

KEYWORDS

Conservation; eco-tourism; natural resource management; development; India, Africa

INTRODUCTION: A CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Conservation policies have often involved harsh schemes where people have been forced to give up land, traditional grazing areas and hunting. Early twentieth century government decisions to establish national parks—or, as in India, the creation of private hunting reserves by local Maharajas, many of which eventually were turned into national parks—were seldom popular in the local communities. Charles C Geisler has pointed to ‘how global land conservation efforts are creating a growing class of invisible refugees in the third world’ (Geisler, 2002: 80–1). People in metropolitan areas and in the west may view conservation measures as something very progressive and enlightened. In poor rural areas where food and fuel is scarce and traditional ways of life still dominant, there are indications that such ideas have little support.
Eco-tourism advocates claim that they have found mechanisms that offer a solution to these dilemmas. Tourism in and around the natural reserves is supposed to generate money and work for the local population, which eventually will make them aware of the economic value of wildlife and conservation (Eagles et al., 2002). The entrepreneurs engaged in the camps and in the safari business are often partly idealists, partly businessmen. The typical eco-traveller to East Africa may today come from any social class in an industrialized country, but will be treated with the same blend of aristocratic exclusivity, ecological enlightenment and rugged experiences on the field. The traveller's interest in experiencing wildlife in this way involves a powerful series of economic and ecological incentives.

In this paper, I will discuss the relation between conservation, tourism and development in four cases in three third world countries. I will first ask to what extent it is possible to simultaneously promote (i) the globally recognised interests of threatened species and their ecosystems in third world countries, and (ii) the equally globally recognised human rights and economic interests of the local populations in and around these areas. Secondly, I will look into the role of tourism as a means to achieving these goals, and the protected area's function in the context of a global economy. I will mainly base my argument on field studies in and around four protected areas in Africa and India in February, April, November and December 2002 and in January 2003.

I will argue that each protected area in fact is part of a 'global commodity chain' and that national parks with their often world-renowned species such as tigers, lions, elephants or gorillas in fact have become global 'commodities' within the growing eco-tourism sector. Eco-tourism itself is a part of the rapidly growing market for international leisure travel.

Various political, ecological and economic ideas have been applied in conservation. Broadly speaking, the early 'pure' conservationist ideals, where humans had no room, have been challenged by more visitor friendly theories, advocating popular access to protected areas. In the developed world, activities around the protected areas are often part of the established national and local economy and praxis, e.g. in Canada, the US and Sweden. Local people around or within protected areas in the third world seldom share the conservationist ideals that we often take for granted in the west, and they have traditionally been affected negatively by the restrictions imposed upon them by conservation.

THE EXPANSION OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Travelling abroad for shorter periods was something very exclusive and reserved for the upper classes well into the twentieth century. From 1960 to 2000 the number of tourist arrivals to Spain increased from 6 to 46 millions. In the year 2000 Swedes made 8.7 million trips abroad; 2.4 millions of these
were to destinations outside of Europe. The most popular destinations in the world year 2000 were France with 74 million arrivals, the United States with 53 millions, Spain and Italy with 40 millions. (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2001, www.wttc.org).

Travel and tourism has certainly become a defining characteristic of modern societies. The possibility of a temporary change of milieu across the globe, individually and for all social classes in sum comprises a qualitatively new experience for human kind.

Still, we must recognise that tourism travel is an asymmetric privilege for those in the developed world and in the middle classes of poorer countries, and that this fact also defines much of the local asymmetries encountered in tourism and eco-tourism.

A focus on eco-tourism commodity chains will give us a more precise understanding of the vague and contested concept of globalisation (Abernethy, 2001; Beck, 1998; Kellner, 2002). Tourism is one of the economically most important industries in the world. It is calculated by the World Tourist Organization that 10.4% of the world’s total GDP in 2004 was derived from the tourist industry and that it employs about 200 million people worldwide, which is almost 8% of the total world employment (World Travel & Tourism Council 2005, www.wttc.org/frameset5.htm). The total economy of business travel amounts only to a fifth. Tourism earnings as share of all services are calculated to be 29% in the EU, 43% in developing countries and more than 70% in the least developed countries (Unctad and World Tourist Organization, cf. www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/wssd/brochure-eng.htm).

In the growing literature on eco-tourism critics such as Rosaleen Duffy describes the growing market for eco-tourism as ‘blue-green conservation’ that only benefit the most spectacular and popular areas, leaving others with no resources (Duffy, 2002a: 155). Consultants and advisors are clearly more optimistic (Eagles et al., 2002; Fennell, 1999; Wearing and Neal, 1999), and Staffan Ulfstrand, a prominent Swedish eco-zoologist claims that ‘tourism is the only hope for African wildlife’ (Ulfstrand, 2002: 71).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Billions of USD</th>
<th>Employment, per cent of total</th>
<th>GDP share, per cent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct impact</td>
<td>Direct and indirect impact</td>
<td>Direct impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Economic impact of travel and tourism in Kenya, South Africa and India, 2004 estimates, World Travel and Tourism Council, 2005
One spectacular example of the increased value of eco-tourism is the mountain gorillas in Bwindi Forest Park in south-western Uganda. The economic input of eco-tourism is considerable, since the fee for each gorilla walk is 360 US dollars (regardless if you actually see gorillas or not) per person (Uganda Wildlife Authority website, 2005). With 400 walks a year with ten persons on each, and a population of about 300 gorillas, each gorilla creates a monetary value of almost 4,800 US dollars per annum, and the whole project a cash inflow of more than 1.4 million US dollars yearly. It is not difficult for the local population – or the central government – to calculate the long-term value of this commodity compared with possible revenues from a short period of poaching.

If benefits from eco-tourism actually find its way to the local inhabitants is another question. As Adams and Infield points out, the earnings from the gorillas ‘is actually seen as substituting for government investment’, and in effect contributing to the founding of the broader national budget rather than being earmarked for development of the gorilla’s habitats or the human communities surrounding them (Adams and Infield, 2003: 185). However, a census of the mountain gorillas carried out by the national parks authorities in Congo, Uganda and Rwanda found a 17% increase of the population since 1989. This certainly suggests that the tourism value of the gorillas do contribute to their own protection (BBC News World Edition, Science/Nature 2004-01-18).

A UN-sponsored conference in 2002 issued ‘The Québec Declaration on Eco-tourism’. It says that it ‘recognizes’ that ‘eco-tourism embraces the principles of sustainable tourism, concerning the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism’. The declaration also offers a kind of definition of eco-tourism, trying to differentiate it from the wider concept of sustainable tourism. The declaration says that eco-tourism:

- Contributes actively to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.
- Includes local and indigenous communities in its planning, development and operation, and contributing to their well-being.
- Interprets the natural and cultural heritage of the destination to visitors.
- Lends itself better to independent travellers, as well as to organised tours for small size groups.

Among several other points, the document especially ‘understand that small and micro business seeking to meet social and environmental objectives are key partners in eco-tourism and are often operating in a development climate that does not provide suitable financial and marketing support for eco-tourism’. The document also stresses that the travellers themselves have a special responsibility in sustaining the places they visit (World Tourism Organisation, Sustainable Development of Ecotourism, International Year of Ecotourism 2002 organized by UNEP and WToO, 1–26 April 2002. ‘Final report’, 2003-06-26).
Wallerstein and Hopkins first developed the concept global commodity chains—GCCs (Gereffi, 1999; Wallerstein and Hopkins, 1994). It is a concept that seeks to track the production of certain commodities not within countries, but along the ‘chain’ of production from raw material to the consumer— or at least to the retailer. Whether it is useful as a tool for understanding development and globalization or not is subject to debate (e.g. Cramer, 1999; Gibbon, 2001; Raikes et al., 2000). Obviously the commodity chain discourse has its roots in structuralism and dependence-theory, even if Clancy and Gereffi modified it in a less materialistic and more post-modernist way (Clancy, 1998; Gereffi, 1999). Methodologically and mentally it is, however, strongly linked to the era— and early sociology— of industrialization. The materialistic undertone is probably part of the explanation why service production and new information technology-based sectors largely have been neglected in the commodity chain discourse.

Basic themes in the GCC discourse are ‘producer driven’ versus ‘buyer driven’ governance structures within commodity chains. Gibbon (2001) has proposed a third force, the ‘trader driven’ chain. The fact that the consumer (individually or collectively) is not considered a force within the theory marks a key difference with classic and indeed neo-classic economics. However, the GCC discourse has a focus on the ongoing relationships within the commodity chains, which seems fruitful in the Eco-tourism perspective.

Wallerstein and Hopkins define a commodity chain as ‘a network of labour and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity’ (Wallerstein and Hopkins, 1994: 17). An economist would argue that the ‘end result’ would be a buying act of a consumer (an individual, a business firm, an organisation or a government body). A commodity with no buyer cannot survive on the market. It is not clear why any elaborate analysis of the role of entrepreneurs, central to economic theory (cf. Schumpeter, 1942; Swedberg, 2000) is so conspicuously absent in the GCC discourse. For the present purposes, it seems relevant to include entrepreneurs in order to understand the Eco-tourism commodity chains.

Gereffi stretches the definition of GCCs when he states that ‘a commodity chain refers to the whole range of activities involved in the design, production and marketing of a product’ (Gereffi, 1999: 38). Clancy discusses the particular shortcomings of the commodity chains approach in studying services and tourism, and finds that states and international co-operation play a greater role in this sector compared to traditional industries. However, he finds the commodity chains approach inventive and useful in other ways, particularly in that it provides ‘an alternative to dominant neo-classical and statist approaches to explaining patterns in third world development’ (Clancy, 1998: 124).
An illuminating critique of the GCC discourse (Raikes et al., 2000: 43) specifically points to its lack of empirical research, while the authors at the same time underlines the potential of the theory for uncovering relations and dependencies within economic life. They also point to the loose and often unspecified use of terms like ‘power’ or ‘governance’, and also to the non-inclusion within most GCC research of existing regulatory frameworks – national and international – where global commodity chains are working.

Anthropologists and some sociologists (Haugerud et al., 2000; MacCannel, 1976; Urry, 1990) have focused on the fact that a material commodity like grapes cannot be understood in purely materialistic terms, but also has to be interpreted symbolically and emotionally from the point of view of the consumer. In a special study on Brazilian grape exports Jane L. Collins has asked what features of grape consumption are significant for social relations along the commodity chain (Collins, 2000: 98). She found that the consumption pattern has expanded dramatically over the last decades, that people no longer eat grapes seasonally, but that they are available all year round. The latter fact provides a market for producers in California during the summer and for producers in Chile during winter. In Europe, consumers get grapes from South Africa, Chile or Brazil depending on which part of the winter season. The grapes thus often travel a long distance. But grapes are also a luxury crop, not at all necessary for basic food supply like potatoes, wheat or rice. The supermarket consumer, ‘stepping through the automatic sliding door and leaving behind a dreadful winter slush’ encounters a ‘wonderland of brightly coloured fruits’ at the fruit stands, gazing over the papayas, mangoes, bananas, oranges, limes and grapes (Collins, 2000: 99).

This more elaborate interpretation of the grape commodity chain is, in fact, a good parallel to tourism. Tourism too has expanded dramatically in the last few decades, making vacations in the sun available not only during summer, but all year around. And yes, travel and tourism is definitely a luxury ‘item’ not necessary for daily living but something that may add value and quality to life. Thus, the exotic lure of grapes compares well to tourism, not least eco-tourism destinations in Africa and India.

But what are the significant differences between a commodity like tourism and grapes? One basic difference is that the grape can be brought to a supermarket close to the consumer, whereas the commodity involved in tourism and eco-tourism is geographically fixed. You have to go there yourself. The experience per se cannot be brought over the oceans; it has to be consumed on the spot. The anticipation of a journey and an adventure can of course be brought to the consumer, which is certainly facilitated by the many travel and wildlife programs on TV, Internet websites and travel magazines. The dream of an adventure travels well across the world.
A second difference is the product itself, which is a service, not a material object. However, if we do not interpret the world completely in materialistic terms, that difference becomes more blurred. Conditions like social circumstances, atmosphere and physical location do matter for the subjective experience of a grape, and the same goes for a service like tourism. Consider the importance of welcome arrangements, whether you travel with your family or on a business trip, if you are accommodated individually or with a group, etc. Perhaps this adds not so much to the material essence of travel as to the fact that there definitely is a subjective and interpretative element also in experiencing material objects.

From a global-local perspective, the ‘commodity’ in eco-tourism is on the one hand highly local and thus cannot be exported along any commodity chains other than by bringing the consumers to the actual places where the protected wildlife is located. On the other hand, the product is ‘created’ in the west or in the urban middle classes in India and Africa, thus embodying ‘virtual’ commodity chains.

As conservationist ideas spread across the globe during the late twentieth century, National Parks – indeed originally created for national consumption – have become more and more global. Travel to protected areas in other countries – as well as donations to organisations that promote conservation of such areas and the species involved – is dependent on proper national regulations. These regulations are often applications of international codes and treaties or inherited from colonial times. In both cases they are examples of global influences on local societies.

The commodity marketed in the eco-tourism business is typically a ‘global’ service, being both global – visiting world-renown protected areas thousands of kilometres away – and local – with local entrepreneurs, small-scale lodges and camping sites, local wildlife and rugged nature. The GCC discourse shall be used here as an instrument with which we can see if and to what extent stakeholders and actors around the protected areas are connected locally and globally.

TOURISM, CONSERVATION AND LOCAL POPULATION: FOUR CASES

There is an obvious but uneasy link between the early hunting safaris in Africa and India and modern eco-tourism. Romantic excitement over continents afar took a new step with the travel accounts by early adventurers such as Speke and Livingstone, and by the spectacular and exotic trade and power politics pursued by the British East India Company and persons like Cecil Rhodes in South Africa. Safaris by royalties and the higher echelons of European and American society in the early twentieth century added to such sentiments. In India, prominent members of the white upper classes were invited to hunt together with local maharajas and princes: 'Sport
hunting evolved into an elaborate ritual, combining elements of princely tradition with British habits’ (Rangarajan, 2001: 69). In Africa and India alike, colonial hunting escalated to such a level that it eventually became devastating for the wildlife, albeit often at the same time reflecting security concerns for the local population (Rangarajan, 2001: 68–79). Many people in rural areas felt that wildlife was a threat. This double role of protecting the rural population and pursuing game hunting was impersonated in Jim Corbett, an employee of the Indian Forestry Service and a famous hunter of man-eating tigers and leopards in northern India during the early 1900s. By his initiative, some shooting blocks in the Kumaon hills were protected as the Ram Ganga reserve; the same areas eventually became the Corbett National Park and Tiger Reserve in present-day Uttaranchal.

In a parallel development, restrictions on forest use were gradually imposed in India by the Raj as well as in other parts of the world as a reaction to recent ‘timber mining’ and reckless overuse of forest resources. Present day conservation in the countries studied here – all former British colonies, and India before that part of the Islamic Mogul Empire – consequently show institutional histories with both local and global influences. In this section, I will present results deriving from the specific conditions and concerns of the major stakeholders in the Kruger National Park in South Africa, the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya and the Corbett and Kanha national parks in India. The results are based on interviews carried out by the author in 2002 and 2003 around the protected areas and with representatives of NGOs and government officials, as well as on official statistics.

In colonial Kenya and India alike, hunting by the local population was defined as poaching. Hunting performed by locals, or by roving bands helped out by the locals, is still defined as poaching, but its character of being outside the law is now supported by international ideas and norms of conservation which, in most cases, also are reflected in national legislation. The legal rights of hunting – once reserved for princes or colonial governors – were transferred to the new, independent governments and their wildlife and forest departments. In fact, several European royalties have engaged actively in conservation efforts through organisations such as the WWF, thus in effect transferring their symbolically powerful royal support from the hunting sport to conservation.

Traditional user rights of the local population such as firewood collecting and hunting have often been severely restricted by conservation and tourism interests. It has been argued that identity-based access is an important factor in these areas:

Local users are often completely excluded from nature reserves, particularly if they intend to extract resources […] although conservation and development activists often expect local people to protect
endangered wildlife and habitats [...]. Scientists, on the other hand, most of whom tend not to be ‘local’ in the sense of villagers, often have privileged access to the resources in a reserve and may even extract or modify those resources for the purpose of their work. (Ribot and Peluso, 2003: 171)

Two other actors identified here that also tend to get access to the natural reserves are the tourist operators and the tourists. Game wardens and foresters are in another category, but they may – like employees in the tourism sector – be recruited locally.

As shown in Table 2, the four parks show significant differences in their environmental, demographic and institutional structure.

The demographic situation in India, and particularly in the Kanha area, is quite different from the African parks, which have a lower density of human population in the immediate vicinity of the protected areas. Of the four parks studied here, only the Maasai Mara in Kenya has mainly foreign visitors. The global influences of different eras are evident in the fact that legal protection of the four areas have been implemented for the sake of conservation, and that local human population has been evicted from all areas for the same reason. In the Northern sector of the Kruger park as well as in Masai Mara, the local population today owns the land and thus are directly linked to the global commodity chains of eco-tourism. Local influences are evident in some of the cases – particularly in Kruger – and by the co-operative frameworks in place between the regulating authorities and the local populations.

**Privatisation in Kruger National Park**

South Africa features one archetypical case of conservationism with the Kruger National Park (KNP), the first part of which was established by Paul Kruger in 1898 as the Sabie Reserve. In 1926 the area had been expanded all the way up to the Luvuvhu River and was made a National Park. Indeed, the park is one of the leading examples of natural protection in the world, and has been very successful in protecting a number of large wildlife species. However, conservationism in South Africa has been controversial, both during and after apartheid. In the last decade, conflicts have surfaced where local tribes started land claims on areas they had been deprived of for conservation and tourism purposes. In several cases – particularly the San in the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park – local tribes were initially seen as part of the eco-system and even protected (Ramutsindela, 2003: 43). Eventually local people were forced to give up land in favour of ideas of ‘pristine’ or ‘preservationist’ ecological management of protected areas, where only wild animals and plants were allowed. This view can still be found among wildlife
Table 2 Institutional, economic and ecological features of the four protected areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Kruger Park, Northern sector, South Africa</th>
<th>Maasai Mara, Kenya</th>
<th>Corbett, Uttaranchal, India</th>
<th>Kanha, Madhya Pradesh, India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protective status</td>
<td>National park</td>
<td>National Reserve</td>
<td>National Park</td>
<td>National Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biotope</td>
<td>Dry wooded savannah</td>
<td>Grass savannah,</td>
<td>Sal forest, river, meadows</td>
<td>Sal, bamboo forest, meadows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main tourist attractions</td>
<td>Lion, leopard, rhino, hippo, elephant</td>
<td>Lion, leopard,</td>
<td>Tiger, deer sp., Indian</td>
<td>Tiger, gaur, deer sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>rhino, hippo,</td>
<td>elephant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist composition</td>
<td>Mainly domestic</td>
<td>10% domestic</td>
<td>90% domestic</td>
<td>90% domestic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership of area</td>
<td>Makuleke tribe</td>
<td>Narok and Transmara counties</td>
<td>State of Uttaranchal</td>
<td>State of Madhya Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local legal arrangements</td>
<td>Treaty between Makulekes and Kruger NP</td>
<td>Narok and Transmara counties</td>
<td>State of Uttaranchal</td>
<td>State of Madhya Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating agency</td>
<td>Joint Management Board</td>
<td>Kenya Wildlife Service</td>
<td>State forest department, Project Tiger</td>
<td>State forest department Project Tiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administering agency</td>
<td>Kruger National Park</td>
<td>City Councils of Narok and Transmara</td>
<td>Corbett National Park authority</td>
<td>Kanha National Park authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue collecting agency</td>
<td>Kruger National Park</td>
<td>(1) Narok city council, (2) Mara Conservancy</td>
<td>National government, Delhi</td>
<td>Kanha National Park authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative framework</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with regional authority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant ethnic group</td>
<td>Makuleke</td>
<td>Maasai</td>
<td>Several</td>
<td>Baigas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>living in vicinity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of human</td>
<td>&gt; 50,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inhabitants close to the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local population evicted</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from core area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

managers not only in South Africa, but in many other countries around the world.

The Kruger Park is also part of a mainly political scheme to integrate national parks of Zimbabwe and Mozambique adjacent to the northern and eastern borders of the Kruger Park – the project is known as the Peace Parks. This proposal has been criticized, and political problems with Zimbabwe have held up plans. There is also a concern that if the fences along the borders are put down, there will be an increasing problem with illegal immigration, primarily from Mozambique. Smuggling and poaching are other problems (Duffy, 2002b: 2).

Rest camps and infrastructure in the Kruger Park belongs to the park authorities. Shops and restaurants have been privatised. A few areas mainly in the southern half of the park have been given out as concession areas. The successful bidders have started to build upmarket lodges in the concession areas.

The Makuleke tribe previously inhabited the very northern part of Kruger National Park, between the Luvuvhu and Limpopo rivers. Following the dominant ‘pristine’ conservationist policies of the time, in August 1969 the Makuleke community were forced to move from 20,000 ha of land in the northern sector. As compensation, they were given the Ntlhaveni area west of the park border immediately south of the Punda Maria gate, which was excised from the KNP’s area. Because the South African government in 1969 did not accept Chief Makuleke as an independent chief, but saw him as falling under another chief, Chief Mhinga, the authority to divide the land that was excised from the Kruger Park was given to Chief Mhinga. As a result the Makulekes only got a part of the 20,000 ha, while the remainder of the land was given to other communities. This caused considerable friction.

The community property association (CPA) represents 11,000 Makulekes and the board is democratically elected. The Kruger Park is responsible for the nature conservation issues and management of the Makuleke region of the Kruger Park. The Makuleke community’s focus is on eco-tourism development, and all development and relevant management issues are decided upon in a joint management board. The CPA has 50% of the votes, the Kruger Park representatives have 50%, and decisions are only taken in full consensus.

A problem for the Makulekes in the Joint management board has been their relative lack of education and experience. Thus, they have had the right to bring consultants into the meetings as observers and advisors.

In general, the Makulekes have struck a fairly good deal. They were forcefully evicted in 1969, but their successful land claim – including the right to keep the new land they were allotted in 1969 – signifies a rather unusual success. They cannot move back to their old territory within the Kruger Park, but they are allowed to start eco-tourist camps and even
organize trophy hunting. Management of the area is now leased out to a private South African Company, who have erected an eco-camp along the Luvuvhu River. In negotiations with this company the Makulekes had to abandon trophy hunting, because that made many animals shy which of course is counterproductive to eco-tourism and photo safaris. The private company has also reintroduced rhinos in the area.

The successful land claim by the Makulekes and the subsequent limited exploitation of some of the area in the northern sector of the Kruger Park all seem to fall well into the regulations and most of the intentions for the ecological management of the Kruger National park as a whole. The collective action problems that could have arisen – such as over-use of the Makuleke area for tourism, hunting and other profit-generation activities – seem not to have taken place. The reason is mostly a carefully construed institutional set-up. This includes the Joint Management Board as well as the contract between the Makuleke community and the Kruger National Park authority, which clearly states that the rules of the National Park are valid also in the Makuleke section.

Possible future problems may arise from lack of economic success in the eco-tourism activities that the Makulekes have engaged in, including the existing up-market lode and a proposed second lodge. The area is not particularly rich in wildlife sightings, and thus the popularity is not as high as the southern sections of the park. The northern part is also relatively less accessible, farther away from the Johannesburg–Pretoria area.

The Makuleke/Northern Kruger Park example shows that the Kruger National Park has both taken land from and given land back to the local Makuleke tribe. The global interest of conservation first worked against the interests of the tribe – they were evicted – but eventually also gave them the opportunity to get revenues from licensed hunting and eco-tourism. The Makuleke tribe can now use their re-claimed land as a local asset within the growing and largely global eco-tourism market. The global anti-apartheid and human rights movement assisted – indirectly – the local re-claim of their land. Global norms of conservation and eco-tourism have strongly influenced the Kruger National Park authorities.

For a long time, local tourism has dominated in Kruger. Conservation and eco-tourism initially worked hand in hand with apartheid in the region, with a very ‘pristine’ view of conservation and a harsh attitude towards the local population. After the fall of apartheid, eco-tourism – with its increasing global component – has been geared to enhance the living conditions and opportunities of the local population.

The Maasai Mara – a National Reserve under two different regimes

Kenya features some of the most famous big game safari destinations in the world, paralleled perhaps only by Tanzania. The number of international
arrivals to Kenya was quite stable around 900,000 during 1995–1999, but then took a jump to 1.2 million in 2001. According to a survey carried out by the Kenya Tourist Board in 2000, involving a random sample of 300 arrivals, only 1% said they came to Kenya for business opportunities. Sixty-eight percent said they came for the wildlife in the game parks and sanctuaries (Kenya Tourist Board, 2001).

The Maasai Mara National Reserve is not a national park; it is formally owned by the Narok and the Transmara local districts, respectively. Conservation efforts in the area have been mixed. From the time of heavy hunting in the 1960s, most of the fauna has recovered. After the ban on ivory trade and a shake-up of the Kenya Wildlife Service in the 1980s, also the elephant population has increased. Rhino however, is almost extinct. Pressure on these two species is, however, primarily considered to be related to poaching.

The majority of the population in the area is Maasai, and this of course also mirrors the political representation in the regional council. The area around the National Reserve is mainly privately owned land, predominantly family or community owned ranches where the Maasai live and herd their livestock.

Global tourism is an important source of income in the area. Revenues come in several different ways. One source is entrance fees for the National Reserve, today 30 US dollars per day. In the southern part of the reserve the fee goes directly to the City Council in Narok. In the Transmara region, a private company leases the right to manage the park. Different observers have commented that the northern, Transmara sector works more efficiently, and also has been better at meeting the environmental goals set up by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) than the Narok section (Interview with Richard Leakey 27 January 2003; with Joacim Kagiri 28 January 2003; with Samson Lejar 29 January 2003). Leasing out management of the Transmara area to the Mara Conservancy has sparked a debate, where some political forces seem discontented with the arrangement (Kantai, 2003). Others say that the people complaining are precisely those who now are blocked from using the cash flow from tourism to their own ends, and that the management of the Transmara sector is working much better with the private company. Visiting the area in 2005, it was evident that the Transmara part of the reserve had better road maintenance, better staff quarters and better equipment that the eastern part. However, further research is clearly needed here.

Other sources of income from tourism in the area are land-lease for tourist camps, lease of temporary camp sites and employment as guides, drivers and other personnel in the tourism sector. Others sell agricultural products and food to the camps and restaurants. All this clearly links the Mara area to global tourism commodity chains, which thus to a considerable degree has shaped development in the area. It is however also evident that tourism,
compared to other globally defined economic activities, is quite diversified and involves many sectors of the economy.

Interestingly, the KWS seems to have quite a low profile and also limited authority in the area. The guards and wardens in the reserve are hired by the city council of Narok, or, in the Transmara sector, by the leasing firm. KWS do not have the benefit of collecting the park fees (Interview with Mr. Samson Lejar 29 January 2003). Some Maasai feel that if there is going to be a private camp on Maasai community land, there should be a public bid for the lease, so that the community is assured of a fair deal. Also, some argue that the small scale of the eco-camps result in too low turnarounds and thus monetary benefits for the Maasai. On the other hand, the small scale and exclusive character of the camps is the very essence of what customers in this segment of the market prefer. The small camps do more easily fit into eco-tourism standards, and are therefore generally preferred in conservationist circles. There are also strong empirical indicators that wildlife protection works well within private conservancies (Uddhammar and Shechambo, 2004: 12, 20).

Several collective action problems, which each may affect the environment negatively in the long run, are present in the Maasai Mara. The most obvious is the non-existence of regulations for driving. You can drive off-road anywhere, which has resulted in a wide network of dirt tracks. If this track system is more detrimental to the eco-system than the widespread tracking by migrating wildlife is, however, yet to be established empirically.

The relation between the Maasai on the one hand, and the more western or modern lifestyles introduced by conservationists, researchers, camp-managers and tourists pose some other difficulties. Female circumcision, strongly patriarchal family structures and a very heavy workload on women are but a few of the features of traditional life in the Mara region which are strongly at odds with modern conceptions of individual human rights and lifestyles based on the principles of gender equality. The differences in lifestyles are striking, and often create a tangible divide between tourists and locals. In other countries the central government and donors alike have indeed encouraged a physical separation between the two groups with the purpose of lessening tensions. This has been called ‘enclave tourism’ and would indeed have to be seen as a consequence of the inclusion of tourism in global trade, even if it in most areas may be more of an unintended consequence than an explicit strategy (Mitchell, 1995: 9–10).

The Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, India

Deep in the forests of the central Indian highlands, the setting of Kipling’s Jungle Book, lies Kanha, one of India’s most renowned Tiger Reserves. The
core area of the reserve features sal and bamboo forests and the famous open meadows where a number of deer species find excellent habitats, including the Barasinga or swamp deer. Tiger, Leopard, Gaur or Indian bison are but a few of the protected species and attractions of the park. The protective measures taken from the 1970s and onwards have been very successful. The tiger population, taken as an indicator, has increased from around 43 to about 147 (Project Tiger website http://projecttiger.nic.in/populationinstate.htm).

The Baiga is a tribal people who have been living in the area for several hundreds years by slash-and-burning and cultivating the forests. Most of the Baigas have been evicted for conservation reasons, which is an irony, considering that the ecologically important meadows in the park were created by their slash-and-burn cultivation. According to foresters that were active during most of these evictions, the villagers were provided with new and better land, housing and ‘even more’ in all or at least many cases. Villagers without property were provided with farming land, and ‘that was also why they moved out’, according to one forester in charge at the time. (Interview with Mr J. J. Dutta 14 April 2002) A special condition of the Kanha park is that the core area of 500 km² is surrounded by a human population of about 100,000 people – mostly of Baiga origin – in the 1,000 km² buffer zone. Inside the core area are 18 villages, whereas 22 already have been relocated to places outside and given new land. The deputy park director of Kanha spends most of his time managing the relations with the local population and trying to lessen their negative impact on the eco-system of the park.

In the Kanha area, there exists no major NGO in favour of the park and its conservation efforts (even though several national and international NGOs have included Kanha in their efforts, like the WWF and the Bombay Natural History Society) but a rather significant NGO with international connections operate in the interest of the Baigas. This NGO was created as a result of the quite insensitive treatment they allegedly were subjected to by the Forest Department of Madhya Pradesh, and thus, in our perspective, by international conservationist interests and norms. The eviction of the Baigas should perhaps be compared to other movements during modernization, such as urbanization or the eviction of people from projected dam basins for hydroelectric plants, e.g. in the recent Yellow River dam project in China.

Since 1997 the entrance fee is redistributed from the Madhya Pradesh State government to the park. The money is accumulated at a Park development account which the director of the park can use for the improvement of the park.

There are several types of joint forest management committees that the Forest Department in Madhya Pradesh may establish in protected areas. The secretary of each committee is an employee of the Forest Department;
the others are elected by the villagers. These committees form a sustained effort from the Forest Department and thus, ultimately from the State Government to build bridges to the local population, and to ensure an ongoing dialogue. The committees, the regulations and the highly professional forestry staff in combination seem to work to meet at least some common goals of the local population, the tourists and conservationist efforts. However, an expected increase in tourism – which inevitably would result from much needed improvements in road conditions – would increase the pressure on the park and its vulnerable ecosystems if not managed properly.

With less than 10% of visitors from abroad, Eco-tourism in the Kanha National Park is in one respect only modestly integrated in the global tourism market (Kumar, 1999: 4). Still, with the lion share of cash revenues coming from foreign tourists, this in a sense makes the park more integrated in the local economy around the park than what it is done through the many Indian visitors. Correspondingly, this also integrates the Kanha Park and its surrounding communities into the global commodity chains of Eco-tourism.

The Corbett National Park, Uttaranchal

Travelling from Delhi northeast over the plains, the landscape changes from farming land to low hills. After five hours on the road, you eventually find yourself surrounded by the forests of the Himalayan foothills. The Corbett National Park is an area close to the city of Ramnagar about 900 m above the sea, not far from Naintal in the new state of Uttaranchal, 250 km from Delhi.

The park was created in 1936 with a total area of 324 km²; in 1966 another 197 km² was added. An area west of the park was transformed into the Sonanadi wildlife sanctuary in 1986, encompassing 300 km². The Corbett National Park and the Sonnanadi area were included in the Corbett Tiger Reserve in 1991, encompassing a total area – including buffer zones – of 1,318 km² (Bhartari, 1999).

The number of visitors to the park increased from 29,000 per year in the 1986–1987 season to 52,000 in the 1997–1998 season, with the ratio of foreign visitors hovering around 10%. However, the wildlife populations expanded also: the number of elephants increased from 192 to 746, the tigers from 92 to 141 and the number of cheetal and sambar deer almost doubled (Bhartari, 1999).

The Wildlife Institute of India has conducted interviews with villagers around the park; the author carried out additional interviews in November 2002.

The park directors expressed concern about the lack of ecological awareness of the local population, ‘their main interest is to make a profit’. Their conceived mission is ‘the conservation of wildlife, managing tourism and
integrating the local inhabitants with the overall park objectives’ (Interview with Mr M. S. Pal 25 November 2002; with Mr E. V. Sinkati 26 November 2002). They also expressed concerns that the tourist economy does not trickle down to the local population to the extent that it should. The relations with the private hotels outside the park were described as good. The main relations with authorities are with Project Tiger at the national level and with the Forest Department in Dehra Dun at state level.

Local camp managers expressed concern about marketing, and that the city council of Ramnagar was not doing enough to help. One manager said that the ideal kind of tourism is ‘a mixture of foreign and Indian clients. Our core strength is in the domestic market, because the domestic market fluctuates less than the foreign. Once we have stabilised that market, we can go on with foreign tourists also. We have a lot of people in Delhi that want to get away in weekends, so they could easily come to these places’ (Interview with Manoj Chudry 24 November 2002).

Villagers overall had a good or neutral relationship with tourists, but often expressed concern about damages by wildlife to their crops and cattle. Many villagers have been relocated from the buffer zone to new areas outside the park. The villagers have in most cases been given new land, and often more fertile land. In one particular village in the southern buffer zone of the park that I visited in November 2002, some villagers had not registered land and their houses were not legally registered either. Most of the villagers that had had registered land – 65%, we were told – had left and been given new, more fertile land. But, for those remaining, there seemed to be few alternatives. They had plenty of abandoned land, but were left with the remaining problems. ‘We are all very poor. We who have not relocated would like to have electric fencing [against wildlife], stay and make the best of this village. There is in fact plenty of land’ (Interview with Baghambar Singh Sanjawar and Nandang Sing Negi 27 November 2002).

The mandatory tourist guides are often recruited locally among villagers, an arrangement that has many advantages. They get training, and it also gives a clear signal to the communities surrounding the park, that conservation is an asset for the region. Employees at the private resorts around the National Park are mostly (91%) local residents, thus channelling a significant part of tourism revenues back to the community (WII, 2002: 17).

Local joint forest management committees and NGOs – particularly the Bombay based, but locally active Corbett Foundation – seem to work quite efficiently with providing information to tourists, medical services to local tribes and to negotiate and explain policies in an effort to enhance local appreciation of the park. The Corbett Foundation also help the villagers to get compensation for cattle killed by wild cats. An effort by the Ramnagar municipality and mayor to create the image of ‘Tiger City’ have certainly increased local awareness of the park and its particular ecological needs.
A number of measures have been taken by the Park management to minimise the negative impact of the increased number of tourists. These include limiting the area accessible for tourists to Dikkala and the southeast part of the park, the need to stay only on the designated roads, time limitations for visitors, mandatory guides and a limitation on the number of vehicles allowed in the part at the same time.

An interesting feature of the Corbett Park that its institutional history draws from several different sources: the colonial forester and conservationist Jim Corbett, international initiatives to save the tiger in the 1970s, national Indian conservation through Project Tiger, the Forestry Civil Service, and NGOs. Also, even if most visitors come from India, more than half the total revenue derives from foreign tourists. Thus, the global connection with the Corbett Park is substantial. With a majority of employees in the camps and the park being recruited in the region, the local connection is also manifest. In the governance of the park there are local committees working, but it is clear that their possibilities of influencing decisions are limited.

We can see in Table 3 that the Mara reserve has the weakest enforcement of rules for the local inhabitants. In tourism management, the Indian parks have the strictest rules, and they are also enforced. Local tourist operators have more freedom in and around the African parks. A special case in the usage of the park by the local population is Maasai Mara, where Maasai do enter the park with their cattle even though it is not allowed. Families and/or game ranches in a wide zone immediately outside the park are also benefiting from leasing out land for permanent tourist camps and temporary bush camps. The Indian system of buffer zones around the parks also creates a ‘shared space’ for both wildlife and low-level utilisation by the local human population, but on publicly owned land.

DISCUSSION

Let us return to the main questions put at the beginning. Is it possible to simultaneously promote human development and conservation? What role do the global commodity chains of eco-tourism play in this context? To start with the last question we have followed the global traveller along four different eco-tourism commodity chains. The end product in these commodity chains are in a physical sense very local, but in another sense actually global, as it is defined by various entrepreneurs and by the consumer at the other end of the chain.

The inclusion of the local populations in and around the protected areas in these commodity chains does not come without problems. The local communities engaged in and affected by eco-tourism are materially more involved where global tourism dominates economically, even if local...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder and type of limitation</th>
<th>Protected area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kruger Park, Northern sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grazing allowed in park?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of firewood allowed?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourists</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Roads only used in parks?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited visiting hours?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mandatory guide?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local tourist operators</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fee for land used for tourism close to the park?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological limitations on hotel operations?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
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tourism in many areas – as in India and South Africa – still dominates in numbers.

Friction between global or western norms of conservation and those of local culture in the third world was frequent when ‘purist’ conservation ideals were practiced in the 1960s and 1970s. These norms and practices were eventually modified to include concerns of local communities and their rights, but from two different directions. One was the globally growing awareness that indigenous people have rights that should be respected and also should get the chance to develop. The other was an instrumental concern that protection of threatened areas needed the co-operation of the local population to be effective, i.e. to gain local acceptance of conservation goals and practices, as well as to curb covert support for poaching.

These concerns have been implemented in varying degrees. In India and South Africa, forestry and national park authorities created committees for co-operation. In Kenya, NGOs and some private tourist operators supplemented these efforts, trying to bring ideas and practices of conservation to work together with practices of human rights and development.

Similar friction or asymmetries occur when the norms and habits of the affluent tourist meets the norms and practices of the local population. To some extent this is probably a universal phenomenon, present also in developed parts of the world when the urban classes go for holidays in the countryside. At the eco-tourist destinations studied here, potential cultural clashes are more evident. However, when the local population is involved – particularly in the cases of Corbett NP in India and Maasai Mara in Kenya – as guides, park officials and as employees in camps and hotels, an interface is created between visitors and visited. Particularly if the employment also includes higher status positions, like camp management and guiding, asymmetries are lessened and the potential for real exchange increases.

The other question is if there are development mechanisms in place that in the long term will lessen economic differences between tourists and the local population. Even though I can only point towards some trends here, it seems clear that some practices seem to work better than others. However, the need for further research is evident, as Kiss (2004) has argued.

Tourism in the world already has a considerable size – about 10% of worldwide GDP – and is predicted to continue growing. Eco-tourists spend more money than the average traveller. This creates economic opportunities that are real and tangible; eco-tourism commodity chains should have a development potential.

Local initiatives in the four areas studied show that a significant number of persons involved on the ground can be involved in this economy, provided that proper training is offered and that a clear strategy from stakeholders and governing agencies is applied. The Makulekes in the northern
sector of the Kruger Park in South Africa and the Maasai communities
around the Maasai Mara in Kenya are perhaps the best examples. With
direct ownership of crucial resources – in particular land – they have the
power basis for creating constructive frameworks for development to-
gether with camp owners and entrepreneurs that often come from the
outside with crucial trade and marketing skills. In this way, they can also
capitalise on the fact that their private land gains extra value from being
located next to the protected areas.

In India, the local population have only been involved in a less direct
way, and not via ownership. They are therefore less empowered within the
commodity chains, whereas the main influence resides with the forestry
and park officials and the private hotel operators.

In three cases – all except Maasai Mara – we have seen that not only
ownership is important, but also the development of governance struc-
tures, such as joint committees for upcoming disputes and outlining man-
agement strategies. In Maasai Mara similar structures have developed in
some cases, but often through private initiatives and not as effective as
those created in the Kruger and Indian cases.

Governance structures, local ownership and institutions for solving dis-
putes and for joint management can be used in order to channel the
economically powerful global commodity chains of eco-tourism towards
goals and practices that are more sustainable. Lacking such structures
and institutions, it is less than clear that the essentially consumer- and
entrepreneur-driven eco-tourism commodity chains can achieve the twin
goals of development and conservation.

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